

*Description:* Differs from *C. f. fulvicapilla* of the karoid regions of the interior of the eastern Cape to the east of the mid- and upper valley of the Great Fish R., northeast to the Drakensberg escarpment and the Maluti of Lesotho, in having the vertex in moderately worn non-breeding dress (August) Argus Brown (Ridgway 1912) *versus* Dresden Brown, and with the dorsum deep Saccardo's Umber, the red-brown of the head-top diffused as a wash over the mantle and scapulars, and the tail rather redder; in worn breeding dress (from November) with the vertex darker, more chestnut and less ochraceous, and with the back rather blacker. The ventral surface in both plumages is about the same. The size ranges smaller than nominate *fulvicapilla*: wings in ♂♂ 48.5–51.5 (in nominate *fulvicapilla* to 54) mm.

*Material examined:* 50 specimens.

*Range:* Moist coastal regions of the southern and southeastern Cape from the George/Knysna region to coastal Transkei, Griqualand East, Natal (except Drakensberg escarpment country of extreme west), and western Zululand.

*Measurements of the Type:* Wing (flattened) 49.5, culmen from base 13, tail 40 mm.

*Remarks:* The name chosen is from the Latin *dumicola*: inhabiting thickets or coppices.

With the description of *C. f. dumicola*, the range of nominate *C. fulvicapilla* will stand as outlined in the above "Description".

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*Address:* Dr. P. A. Clancey, Durban Museum, P.O. Box 4085, Durban 4000, South Africa.

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## A new subspecies of the Usambara Weaver *Ploceus nicolli*

by N.—E. Franzmann

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The affinity of the 2 East African weavers *Ploceus olivaceiceps* and *P. nicolli* has been disputed for some time. Both forms were originally described as separate species and were also treated as such by Mackworth-Præd & Grant (1960). It was apparently Moreau (1960: 465) who first suggested that *olivaceiceps* and *nicolli* were conspecific, repeating this in Peters' (1962: 56), but later (1966: 88) changing his mind. Hall & Moreau (1970: 292) considered *nicolli* "at least an incipient species". Britton (1980: 212) also treats *nicolli* as a colour form of *olivaceiceps*.

While working on a large collection of skins collected in Tanzania by Thorkild Andersen between 1947 and 1965, a specimen clearly belonging to this weaver complex, but different from the forms hitherto described, was discovered. For the reasons given below, this finding leads me to believe that *P. olivaceiceps* and *P. nicolli* are best treated as separate species. I propose the new form be considered a subspecies of *P. nicolli*, as follows:

***Ploceus nicolli anderseni* subsp. nov.**

*Type.* Adult ♂ collected 23 May 1952 by Thorkild Andersen in the Uluguru Mts., Tanzania, elevation 1500–1800 m. Collector's No. 144. Type at the Zoological Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark. No. 10.5. 1982: 1.

*Description.* The male differs from nominate *nicolli* in having forehead, crown and nape black with a sepia brown cast. There is no trace of yellow, not even on the forehead. The throat is very dark, almost black, as opposed to dark brown. This dark area is also more extensive in *anderseni* than in the nominate form, while the chestnut chest-band is narrower in *anderseni*. The feet are light brown, the bill black and the iris brown.

The female *anderseni* differs from nominate females in having the throat darker brown. The crown of the female *anderseni* is very dark brown, almost black, whereas the crown colour of nominate females varies from dusky brown to very dark brown.

*Measurements of type* (mm). Wing (chord) 88, tail 48, tarsus 23.3 and culmen from base 17.3.

*Range.* The Uluguru Mountains (7° 10'S, 37° 40'E), Morogoro District, Morogoro Region, Tanzania above 1400 m. Sight records from the Mwanihana Forest (7° 45'S, 36° 50'E), Uzungwa Mountains, Kilombero District, Morogoro Region can also be assigned to this subspecies.

*Specimens examined.* *Ploceus olivaceiceps* (13). Mzimba, Malawi 1 ♂, 1 ♀ British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH); Kapiriuta, Malawi 1 ♀ (BMNH); Michiru Hill, Malawi 1 ♀ (BMNH); Unangu, Mozambique 1 ♂ (BMNH); Furancungo, Mozambique 3 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀ (BMNH); Songea, Tanzania 1 ♂, 1 ♀ (Zoological Museum, Copenhagen) (ZMC).

*P. n. nicolli* (13). Amani, Tanzania 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀ including type (BMNH); Lushoto, Tanzania 1 ♀ (BMNH); Shume, Manolo & Lushoto, West Usambara, Tanzania 3 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀, 1 ♂ imm, 3 ♀♀ imm (Peabody Museum of Natural History) (PMNH).

*P. n. anderseni.* (2) Uluguru Mts, Tanzania 1 ♂ type (ZMC), 1 ♀ (PMNH).

*Remarks.* The only ♀ specimen of *anderseni* was collected in the Uluguru Mountains by G. H. Heinrich at 1600 m. on 10 December 1961 (Ripley & Heinrich 1966). I consider *P. nicolli* and *P. olivaceiceps* to be separate species for the following 2 reasons: first, although *anderseni* is much closer to *olivaceiceps* geographically, it is even less similar to it than is nominate *nicolli*. In the male *olivaceiceps* there is a distinct yellow forehead. To a varying degree this is also seen in nominate *nicolli*, but there is no trace of this character in *anderseni*. *P. n. anderseni* is generally darker around the head and throat than nominate *nicolli*, whereas *olivaceiceps* is much paler; secondly both nominate *nicolli* and *anderseni* are inhabitants of the canopy of high mountain rain forest, whilst *olivaceiceps* is a denizen of *Brachystegia* woodland (Stuart & van der Willigen 1978). I do not doubt the common ancestry of the 2 species,

but both have clearly diverged very considerably, both in plumage characteristics and habitat requirements. They are best regarded as forming a superspecies in the sense of Hall & Moreau (1970).

*Plocus nicolli* is a rather variable species. In the nominate subspecies, the forehead of the male is always dull yellow, but this may sometimes extend over the crown and nape. This was noted by Ripley & Heinrich (1966), who also pointed out the variability in the female head colour from dusky brown to black. With only 2 specimens of *anderseni* it is not possible to comment on such variability except to note that both Uluguru specimens have plumage characteristics well outside the limits of variation shown by nominate *nicolli*.

*Plocus nicolli* has recently been seen in the Mwanihana Forest, on the eastern scarp of the Uzungwa Mountains in eastern Tanzania. This is a new locality for the species. Very good field observations were obtained by S. N. Stuart and Miss T. A. van der Willigen at 1150–1200 m, both of whom noted the very dark heads and absence of yellow forehead. I therefore ascribe these birds provisionally to *anderseni*. In addition to the 2 specimens of *anderseni* collected in the Uluguru, a field observation of one individual was recently made in Kinole Forest (6° 53'S, 37° 44'E) at 1350 m (Stuart & Jensen 1981) on the eastern side of the mountains.

This subspecies is named after the collector, the late Thorkild Andersen, whose collection of birds from Tanzania is one of the most extensive ever made.

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*Address:* N.-E. Franzmann, Game Biology Station, Kalø, DK- 8410 Rønde, Denmark.